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JUN 24 2008

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Remarks

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application.

The indication that claims 5-7 and 10 define allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. To that end claim 5 has been rewritten in independent form. Claims 6, 7 and 10 depend directly or indirectly on allowable claim 5. Claims 8 and 9 are amended so as to depend on allowable claim 5 and are deemed to be allowable as well.

All claims are further amended to obviate inadvertent syntax errors that have arisen during translation into English. The Examiner's helpful suggestions on improving claim language are gratefully acknowledged. The present amendments to the claims are believed to obviate the rejection of all claims based on 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

No new matter has been introduced by the present claim amendments.

The rejection of claims 1-4, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Lah, U.S. Patent No. 6,565,714, in combination with Casey et al., U.S. Patent No. 7,108,793, is not warranted, and is hereby traversed.

First of all, Casey et al. is not available as a reference in this case inasmuch as the present application claims a priority date of 10 January 2002 whereas the earliest possible date for the Casey et al. reference is 11 April 2002.

Even if Casey et al. was deemed to be available as a reference against the present claims, the attempted combination of the teachings of Lah with Casey et al. does not vitiate the patentability of the present claims.

As noted by the Examiner, Lah does not teach extraction drainage and wet transport of petroleum coke as described and claimed in this application. Neither does Casey et al.

Lah merely describes the removal of coke from the coker drum utilizing, *inter alia*, a pilot hole drilled by water jets. Lah, col. 7, l. 44-47. While Lah mentions dewatering of coke at col. 7, l. 50, Lah neither teaches nor suggests wet transport and drainage of petroleum coke by any specific means. The cited passage at col. 7, l. 54-65, clearly is inapposite vis-a-vis the present claims.

Casey et al. does not remedy the deficiencies of Lah as a reference in any event even if the teachings of both references are combined. Casey et al. teaches the use of a

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vibratory deck that utilizes a vibratory force to separate water from petroleum coke, not a conveyor with apertured belt. See, for example, FIG. 1 of Casey et al., the description thereof at col. 2, l. 31-37, and description of the operation at col. 4, l. 46 to col. 5, l. 2. Casey et al. supplies no teaching whatsoever of the claimed system that includes a pre-crusher, a containment and drainage hopper, a draining-extracting belt, a water collection system, a further draining belt, and a rubber belt for drained coke transport to storage. Casey et al. transports water-containing coke in an entirely different manner as can be readily seen from the foregoing descriptions.

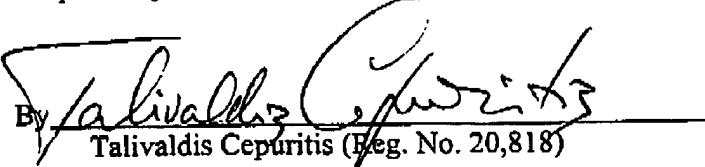
There is no valid basis for combining the teachings of Lah and Casey et al., however. The Examiner has offered no rationale for doing so. The mere statement that it would have been obvious to do so is not enough. No reasoning has been advanced why one of ordinary skill would have selected the vibratory deck system of Casey et al. in preference to any other dewatering system. Moreover, there are no factual findings of record as to the level of ordinary skill in the art of wet transport of petroleum coke, thus it is not possible on the present record to make any determination as to what one of ordinary skill in the art of wet transport of petroleum coke would or would not have done.

The concept of drilling a pilot hole in a coke deposit in a coking tower with water jets as described by Lah is very different from wet transport of crushed petroleum coke as presently claimed.

The prior art made of record but not applied against the claims has been reviewed with interest, but does not affect the patentability of the present claims.

Early passing of this application to issue is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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